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in Gaul does not weaken the fact that Gaul had for a long time previous enjoyed the possession of a learned and legally well-defined conception of property ; but what the author has failed to see is that the establishment of a Germanic kingdom covered that property with a protection which was very precisely granted to it by the letter of the Roman law, but which was secured by no real power whatever at the time of the invasions. It was literally "self-interest well understood" which led the Gallo-Roman land-owners to receive the German invader without repugnance.

In the vast field of history it is not easy to find a subject so interesting as that which M. de Coulanges has undertaken to treat, but it is hardly possible to find another more difficult. The importance of the subject and the author must excuse the length of this notice. With a work of this nature, the first object of criticism should be to measure its scientific value. As it stands, with its remarkable style, this new book of M. de Coulanges will doubtless be agreeable reading to educated people, and especially to that public, more numerous and important in France than elsewhere, which is known under the general description of *gens de goût*, but its life will be only a short one if measured by the memory of historians.

T.

7. — *Three Essays on Religion*. By JOHN STUART MILL. New York : Henry Holt & Co. 1874. 8vo. pp. xi and 302.

THE Essays on Religion, published after Mr. Mill's death by his step-daughter, were written at considerable intervals of time, and, Miss Taylor thinks, without any intention of forming a consecutive series. However that may be, — and there are some indications to the contrary, — the main drift and the attitude of mind seem substantially the same in all, and the only differences in result such as come very naturally from the greater or less weight which a candid mind from time to time, or from different points of view, may accord to what in any case are only conjectures. Most writers on Religion begin by assuming their fact, namely, a supersensuous reality, and even those who consider themselves the most "radical" commonly leave this fundamental presupposition untouched. Mr. Mill's undertaking is to leave out all presuppositions, and to look at the matter from the point of view of science, and not of reverence ; to disengage the phenomena of Belief from the imagery under which they are ordinarily disguised, and to see what are the proper conclusions to be drawn from them.

One of these idols is Nature. To follow Nature was a fundamental rule of morals among the ancients; and among the moderns, that "Nature enjoins" any mode of thinking, feeling, or acting, is felt to be a strong argument for its goodness. Christian theology indeed opposed some hindrance to this apotheosis of Nature, in the doctrine that man is by nature wicked. But this very doctrine, by the reaction which it provoked, has made the deistical moralists almost unanimous in proclaiming the divinity of Nature, and setting up its fancied dictates as an authoritative rule of action. In his first Essay, Mr. Mill scrutinizes the collective noun which has thus been set up as an object of worship, and very readily finds that, looked at soberly, it is indeed nothing but a name for all facts, actual or possible; or else, as opposed to Art, a designation of whatever is or happens without the voluntary agency of man. In neither of these senses can Nature be made a standard of conduct, or be properly said to "enjoin" anything. To act according to Nature must mean either to do what we do, or else to act without forethought or purpose. The business of life, on the contrary, is to subvert and abolish Nature, and to put Art in her place. To dig, to plough, to build, to wear clothes, are direct infringements of the injunction to follow Nature. The consciousness that whatever man does to improve his condition is in so much a censure and a thwarting of the spontaneous order of Nature, has in all ages cast a shade of religious suspicion upon unprecedented attempts at improvement. The sagacity of priests showed them a way to reconcile the impunity of particular infringements with the maintenance of the general dread of encroaching on the divine administration. But there still exists a vague notion that, though it is very proper to control this or the other natural phenomenon, the general scheme of nature is a model for us to imitate; that it is God's work, and, as such, perfect. In truth, however, nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to each other, are Nature's every-day performances. Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, Nature does once to every being that lives, and often after tortures such as only the greatest monsters ever purposely inflicted on their fellow-creatures. Even the provisions she makes for the renewal and the support of animal life are so clumsy as to be constant occasions of misery instead of happiness. We are told that under this appearance of callous indifference lies hidden a wise and beneficent purpose. But in reality no one consistently believes in this occult beneficence; else everything done to counteract Nature's operations, from draining a pestilential marsh down to curing the toothache or putting up an umbrella, ought to be accounted impious.

Good, to be sure, does come from natural calamities, as also from human crimes ; but this only shows how rudely made and capriciously governed are this planet and the life of its inhabitants. And if it be said that the goodness of God does not consist in willing the happiness of his creatures, but their virtue, here, too, it must be confessed that his designs are completely baffled. The truth is, on no theory can the government of Nature be made to resemble the work of a being at once good and omnipotent. If the writers on natural theology, instead of attempting to show that the suffering and evil in the world exist to prevent greater, would admit that the Principle of Good *cannot* at once and altogether subdue the power of evil, we might console ourselves with the thought that we may be the not ineffectual auxiliaries of a Being of perfect beneficence but limited power. But if the Maker of the world *can* all that he will, it is evident that he wills misery. Even our virtues are achieved in direct contradiction to his intention, as shown in the impulses he has implanted in us. Courage, veracity, justice, cleanliness, are contrary to Nature, and must on this theory be contrary to God's will.

The second Essay treats of the Utility of Religion. Apart from the question of its truth, and even admitting that the hypothesis of a God such as the popular theology sets before us is logically incoherent, still it may be of use, just as a guide-mark, though itself fallacious, may happen to point in the direction of our line of march, and, if it is more conspicuous and legible, be of more real service to us than more legitimate but fainter indications. Religion may be morally useful without being intellectually sustainable. Religion and poetry both supply the same want of the human mind, that of ideal conceptions grander and more beautiful than we see realized in the prose of human life. The distinctive mark of Religion is the craving for realities answering to these imaginative conceptions, in some other world than ours. Its value, therefore, as a source of personal satisfaction and of elevated feelings, is not to be despised. But why is it necessary, in order to obtain this good, to travel beyond the boundaries of the world which we inhabit? Many will exclaim that the short duration, the insignificance, of our actual life make it impossible. But, if individual life is short, the life of the human species is not short ; its indefinite duration is practically equivalent to endlessness, and its indefinite capability of improvement offers an object large enough to satisfy any reasonable aspirations. The Religion of Humanity is capable of fulfilling every important function of religion, and would fulfil them better than any form of supernaturalism. In the first place, it is disinterested. It is a radical inferiority of the

best supernatural religions that they make virtue selfish, by inculcating the expectation of reward in another life. Then it does not involve that torpidity, or even positive twist in the intellectual faculties, without which the supernatural religions cannot produce their best moral effect. It resigns the belief in an omnipotent Creator ; but it does not exclude the idea of a struggle between a beneficent Deity and an intractable material or a Principle of Evil, in which we may participate as fellow-laborers with the Highest. It does not hold out an assured prospect of a life after death. But as mankind grow happier in their present lives they will care less and less for another. Under better conditions, not annihilation but immortality may be the burdensome idea, and human nature may find comfort and not sadness in the thought that it is not chained through eternity to a conscious existence which it cannot be assured that it will always wish to preserve.

The third Essay of the series, that entitled Theism, was written about ten years later than the others, and never finally revised for the press by its author. There is nothing in it, as it stands, that seems inconsistent with the position assumed in the other two ; but it approaches more directly what, as Mr. Mill says, is the most important question concerning Religion, namely, whether it is true. Ideas can only prove ideas, not facts ; hopes and aspirations prove that we hope and aspire, but not that we have any ground for doing so. Are the doctrines of religion, then, considered as scientific theorems, founded on sufficient evidence ? First of all, is the hypothesis that the universe, or at least the present order of things, is the work of an intelligent and beneficent Mind, a legitimate one ? Under proper limitations, Mr. Mill thinks that it may be. There is evidence, he says, insufficient for proof, but amounting to one of the lower degrees of probability, pointing to the creation, not indeed of the universe, but of the present order of it, by an Intelligent Mind, whose power over the materials was not absolute, whose love for his creatures was not his sole actuating inducement, but who nevertheless desired their good. The notion of a providential government by an omnipotent Being for the good of his creatures must be entirely dismissed ; but it remains a simple possibility, which those may dwell on to whom it yields comfort, to suppose that blessings to which human power is inadequate may come from the bounty of an intelligence beyond the human, and which continuously cares for man. The possibility of a life after death rests on the same footing, — of a boon which this powerful Being, who wishes well to man, may have the power to grant. In all our experience, it is true, life and thought are asso-

ciated with a perishable body ; but this association is no metaphysical necessity, but simply a constant coexistence within the limits of observation. There is a total absence of evidence for or against immortality ; but in this case the absence of evidence for the affirmative does not, as in so many cases it does, create a strong presumption in favor of the negative, because we are unable to experiment in the matter, and so determine whether cerebral action is a cause or only a condition *sine qua non* of mental operations. In order to be certain, we should have to produce an organism and try whether it would feel and think. This we cannot do ; organisms cannot by any human means be produced, they can only be developed out of a previous organism. There remains then the hope — which so long as it does not pretend to be anything more is not irrational — that the supernatural may be a reality and not a dream. The indulgence of this hope, in a region of imagination merely, and provided it goes *pari passu* with the cultivation of severe reason, has no necessary tendency to pervert the judgment, and its beneficial effect is far from trifling. It makes life and human nature a far greater thing to the feelings, and displaces the disastrous feeling of “not worth while,” by which our loftier aspirations are checked and kept down. Then the idealization of our standard of excellence, in the person of Christ, even when that Person is conceived as merely imaginary, is infinitely precious to mankind, by translating the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete. “Impressions such as these, though not in themselves amounting to what can properly be called a religion, seem to me excellently fitted to aid and fortify that real though purely human religion, which sometimes calls itself the Religion of Humanity, and sometimes that of Duty.” “One elevated feeling this form of religious idea admits of, which is not open to those who believe in the omnipotence of the good principle in the universe, — the feeling of helping God, of requiting the good he has given by a voluntary co-operation which he, not being omnipotent, really needs, and by which a somewhat nearer approach may be made to the fulfilment of his purposes.”

What strikes us first of all, as we follow these interesting conjectures, is that there is a drawback attending the investigation of morals and religion by methods which exclude from consideration all hypotheses involving real existences which the senses give us no means of imagining, this, namely, that we have to place ourselves out of sight of the facts we are investigating. In the Essay on Nature, Mr. Mill's definition of Nature ought to have shown him that in stating his question he had emptied it of all meaning. If Nature is only a general name for our sensations, it is easy to see that it cannot

serve as a guide, an ideal, or a rule of conduct. But the difficulty remains to imagine what can be in the minds of those who (p. 110) still continue to talk of the intrinsic capacities of human nature, as distinct from the forms in which those capacities happen to have been historically developed, and who would make out of these non-apparent capacities the proper object of religious worship. Avoiding all *a priori* reasoning, human nature must be the sum of those impressions which we have received from the people we have met ; and these impressions can have no capacity except to exist or be felt ; to distinguish what is intrinsic in them from what is actually experienced, is to substitute imaginations for facts. Evidently, however, Mr. Mill, when he is not hindered by the theory that the senses are the inlet of knowledge, feels, as every one does, that the reality of a thing is not the sensuous impression, but what the impression presupposes ; the Notion or *nature* which manifests itself to us through the senses, but only on the condition that we *understand* our sensations, — that is, draw from them the proper inferences. Those who bid us follow Nature do not mean that we are to do what we do, or what others do, or what the elements or the beasts do ; but that we are to bring our lives into accordance with that notion of Man with which Conscience supplies us ; as the plant or the animal, though here involuntarily, embodies the notion of the genus. Something of this sort seems to lie at the bottom of the "Religion of Humanity," only that, instead of hearing in the intimations of conscience the voice of that divine spirit which animates every man that comes into the world and makes him man, Mr. Mill is forced to attach them to an abstraction, an endless succession of human beings, whose possible happiness and indefinite capability of improvement we are to make the object of our aspirations. But, as Mr. Mill found in his own experience, as related in his Autobiography, such a sentiment, however real, is much too vague to constitute a religion. It contents itself with averages and tendencies ; it does not come home to each one of us as the sufficient object of life.

In all Mr. Mill's discussions of Religion, we hear the theories of an ingenious and candid man about facts which he cannot overlook, but which do not fit into his framework of thought. They are like the speculations of a blind man about pictures, — or rather of a man having the power of sight, but conceiving it to be his duty not to use his eyes, and so in perfect good faith exploring the surface of the canvas with his fingers, candidly admitting a sort of attraction, which ought to be accounted for, and endeavoring to hit upon the particular confusion of thought to which it is due. That there is no such matter to

be *seen* as is pretended, he is quite clear ; but then, if people do in fact find satisfaction and elevation of mind in pacing the galleries and gazing at these parti-colored parallelograms, it would be a pity to disturb them, only we cannot pretend to be taken in by the cant which artists are sagacious enough to encourage about the momentous differences between this and that. There is, beyond doubt, a distinct satisfaction in the act of looking, and this being so, there must be something to look at ; but when mankind are once sufficiently educated, the bare canvases will serve the turn as well, and make no false pretences.

In spite of the earnest and even religious temper of these Essays, there is something fairly comic in the conception of a probable God, of limited capacities, whom we may perhaps help out in his desperate task of governing the world. Believers and sceptics, we think, will unite in protesting that nothing can be more improbable. We may find the hypothesis of a divine ruler of the universe incredible or superfluous, but it must at any rate be adequate. God is the necessary implication of every fact of our experience, more conspicuously of the phenomena of conscience, yet of all phenomena. We may decide that the implication is unnecessary ; that the facts can very well take care of themselves ; but it cannot be *partly* necessary.

But if there is no room in Mr. Mill's philosophy for the idea of God, this need the less surprise us when we remember that there is no room either for the idea of Self. The Self, as the unity of the separate facts of consciousness, cannot, Mr. Mill says,* be conceived as a reality, because in reality they are separate ; a series of impressions and emotions, each occupying its own place and its own moment. The Self cannot be a unit, because experience shows that it is a stream of feelings, each of them capable of a faint repetition, but each itself and not any other. So the conception of God as the explanation of the universe ; the comprehensive unity in which all things live and move and have their being, contradicts experience, for there is in fact no such Cosmos as it would suppose, but rather a Chaos ; at least the only conceivable end and aim of sentient being, happiness, is attained in a very incomplete and intermittent fashion in the world as we know it. In the brute creation we find no distinct provision for the prevention of cruelty and suffering ; still less in the life of man any settled successful purpose to make him comfortable ; but rather the purpose to lure him away from the enjoyment of ease and security, in the pursuit of a happiness that is

* An Examination of Sir William Hamilton's Philosophy (Am. ed.), I. p. 262.

never reached. Some dream of wealth, power, liberty, knowledge, love, is forever plucking him up from his snug repose, and sending him forth to toil and suffer his life long, — and for what? Not for any gain of personal satisfaction that we can discover. Still, in the case of the Self, by far the wisest thing we can do, Mr. Mill decides, is to accept the inexplicable fact of personal identity, without any theory of how it takes place. By parity of reasoning it might seem wisest to accept the fact of a divine order of the universe, if we find ourselves compelled to do so, even though Creation, if looked at as the work of a utilitarian philosopher, seems palpably a failure. Especially for Mr. Mill, since he confesses in the Essay on Liberty that increased freedom to seek each his own satisfaction in his own way has not tended to better the condition of mankind, to bring men nearer to the best thing they can be, but rather to produce a stunted type of humanity, incapable of suffering or of enjoying much, and, as he says, to make mediocrity the ascendant power among mankind. Here and in the Autobiography, and indeed throughout Mr. Mill's later writings, are glimpses of a far different end for human life than happiness; namely, the purpose to bring human beings themselves nearer to "the ideal conception embodied in them." Such a thought, whatever it leaves unaccounted for in our fortunes, seems fitted to take away the sense of hostility in the forces that govern our lives, and so to dispose of the indictment which Mr. Mill brings against Providence. Such ideas, however, are excluded by the postulates of Mr. Mill's philosophy, and remain only as hopes, aspirations to be indulged in the region of the imagination; or as probabilities, not in the sense of facts imperfectly proved, but in the sense of haunting conjectures which reason can neither sanction nor shake off, phantoms to which passing emotion may lend the momentary semblance of life, not realities having any proper place in the actual world. Hence the uncertainty of treatment remarked upon by disciples and opponents in these and other recent Essays of Mr. Mill. It seems often like mere inconsistency, but it is only the legitimate effect of an exorbitant cultivation of the faculties of analysis and discussion at the expense of the faculty of perception. Each concrete fact of experience is reduced to a *caput mortuum*, and no longer corresponds to its real self. The act of knowing destroys its object, which comes to life again, but outside the pale of philosophy, so that we can never be sure whether we are dealing with the ghost which alone can be proved and known, or with the real fact which can be only hoped for and aspired after.

To the American edition has been added an Essay on Berkeley from the Fortnightly Review; the last publication, we believe, of its

author. It shows the same method applied to Metaphysics. Berkeley, as a consistent empiricist, saw that Sensation shuts itself up within its own home, and does not include its object. The object must be supplied from without, and he supplied it provisionally by the name of God. Mr. Mill's improvement was to substitute as the object "the permanent possibility of sensations," not seeing apparently that this is another way of saying that knowledge is an illusion, that we never really get beyond our own sensations, but only come, through their repetition, to fancy that they are something more.

8. — *Young Folks' History of the United States.* By THOMAS WENTWORTH HIGGINSON. Boston : Lee and Shepard. 1875.

THIS capital little book solves a problem that at first sight seems hopeless, — how, in a small duodecimo of three hundred and twenty-nine pages, to convey a clear, true, and forcible impression of the whole history of the United States, from the earliest discoveries to the present time. The subject in itself is a very unmanageable one. The division into numerous Colonies, independent of each other, deprives it of the unity of action almost indispensable to making an attractive story of the ante-Revolutionary period, while the rest of the narrative has little other than a political interest, which very rarely commends itself to "Young Folks." To put this incongruous and complicated history into a nutshell, and make it at the same time wholesome and savory, is an achievement requiring no little skill.

Mr. Higginson has adopted a plan of picture-writing in which the broad aspects of his subject are rapidly sketched out, and then enlivened with a few striking and characteristic details, excellently fitted to impress the whole strongly and justly on the mind of a youthful reader or of an older one. This union of the particular and the general is one of the most marked features of the book. It appears especially in his portraits of the various Colonies. No intelligent child can read his account of New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Georgia without fixing in his memory their chief distinctive traits. Thus, after being told the principles on which Massachusetts was founded, he is invited to take a near view of the Puritan settlements : —

"If we could carry ourselves back to those days, and were to approach a New England village about nine o'clock on Sunday morning, we should hear some one beating a drum, or sounding a horn, or blowing a conch-shell, or possibly ringing a bell, to call people to worship. As we came nearer still, we should